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ABSTRACT

This is the second report card on the New York City public schools issued by the Manhattan Institute's Center for Civic Innovation. The "just the facts" format provides a statistical review of performance over 10 years using data made available by the State Education Department and the City Board of Education. In the short term, data show that high school completion rates are slightly up, and that scores on standardized tests have improved. The slight increase in high school completion is overshadowed by a long-term trend in which about half the students complete their studies in 4 years and an additional 20% do so by the age of 21. It appears as though, if the Regent's examinations remain rigorous, about 16% of the students in New York City will be able to meet the state's new and more rigorous requirements for a high school diploma in the future. An increasing number of students have been forsaking the traditional diploma for an "equivalent diploma." Such students are less likely to do well in college. The improvements in standardized test scores are somewhat more encouraging, but still, tests reveal that about 60% of students attending elementary and middle schools in the city are not reading at an acceptable level. A large disparity is evident in academic performance defined by race, and this gap is apparent on all measures of academic performance. New York City has a high percentage of students who are in the lowest quartile of academic performance. Tables provide information on student academic achievement and high school completion, with details about the performance of schools, students in various ethnic groups, and special education students. (Contains 13 graphs and 10 tables.) (SLD)

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ED 448 242

Civic Report

No. 13 September 2000

State of the New York City Public Schools 2000

Introduction
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INTRODUCTION

This is the second Report Card on the New York City public schools issued by the Center for Civic Innovation, the first of which was prepared in cooperation with the Public Education Association in 1998. The "just the facts" format is designed to provide a statistical review of performance over a period of ten years, drawing on data made available by the State Education Department and the City Board of Education.

Along with recent changes in the recorded performance of students, there are more notable long term patterns that give us a fuller picture of what is happening. For example, in the short term, high school completion rates are slightly up and the scores on standardized tests have improved. The slight increase in high school completion is overshadowed by a long-term trend in which about half the students complete their studies in four years, and an additional 20% do so by the age 21. With past Regents examinations as a guide, it appears that, so long as these examinations remain rigorous, about 16% of the students in New York City will be able to meet the state's new and more rigorous requirements for a high school diploma in the coming years.

An increasing number of students have been forsaking a traditional diploma for what has been inappropriately dubbed an "equivalent diploma" or GED. The truth is that those students who do not receive a traditional diploma are less likely to attend and do well in college. While New York will always have a large number of jobs available for unskilled workers, it is becoming increasingly difficult to make a good living in the high tech world of the twenty-first century without the proper credentials. The common path that gave New York its reputation as a gateway to opportunity for many past generations begins with a high school diploma and leads to a college degree. Proportionately less than half as many city students take the SAT exams for college admissions as their peers around the state. Of those who take the test, city students average 40 to 50 points lower in the various subject areas.

The recent improvements in standardized test scores administered by the State Education Department and City Board of Education are somewhat more encouraging. The rise is evident both on state tests given to fourth graders and on city tests given in other grades; and the improvement is evident across most of the city. The larger picture, however, is not so rosy. Both city and state tests indicate that about 60% of the children attending elementary and middle schools in the city are not reading at an acceptable level. Approximately 70% have not attained proficiency in math.

Within this general pattern is a large disparity in academic performance defined by race. By and large the gap between African American and Hispanic students on the low end, and white and Asian students on the upper end is profound, and it is apparent on all measures of academic performance—state tests, city tests, SAT scores and graduation rates.

The gap in performance associated with race is not unique to New York City. For the last thirty years it has been a widely recognized American phenomenon, most dramatically apparent in urban settings. The data in this report show that students who attend urban public schools throughout the state lag behind their counterparts who live in suburban and rural areas. The great danger in highlighting this fact is that it often becomes a basis for using race as an

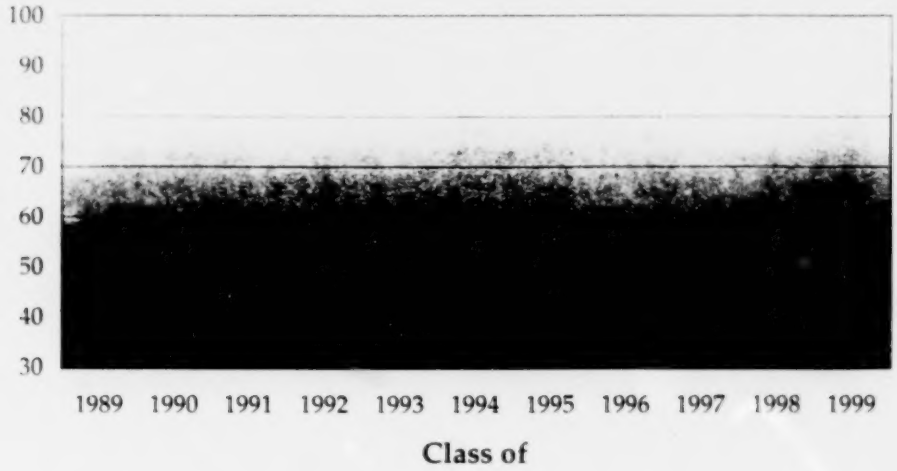
excuse for academic failure, leading to a quiet resignation about the current state of affairs in many inner-city communities. A large proportion of low-performing students get inappropriately placed in special education and bilingual education programs, where academic outcomes are even more discouraging.

When one looks more closely at the available information, something else becomes apparent. New York City has a high percentage of students who are in the lowest quartile of performance. Many of these students attend schools that end up on the state's list of chronically low performing schools (the SURR list). In fact all but eight of the 105 schools included on this notorious list are in New York City. This list of 97 schools, as extensive as it might be, actually understates the incidence of academic failure at the school level. In fact, nearly 30 percent of the 677 elementary schools in NYC have less than 30 percent of their students reading at an acceptable level; half the elementary schools have less than 40 percent reading at an acceptable level.

The urgency communicated by this information should be clear. While the turnaround of the public school system is likely, even under the most optimistic of circumstances, to be an incremental process, there are some, all too many students who are in need of immediate relief from a culture of despair that captures chronically failing schools in the poorest communities of the city. In such places race and class have not just provided an excuse for academic failure; failure has become an implicit rationale for a continuing state of academic neglect.

At what rate do NYC students finish high school in the traditional four years?

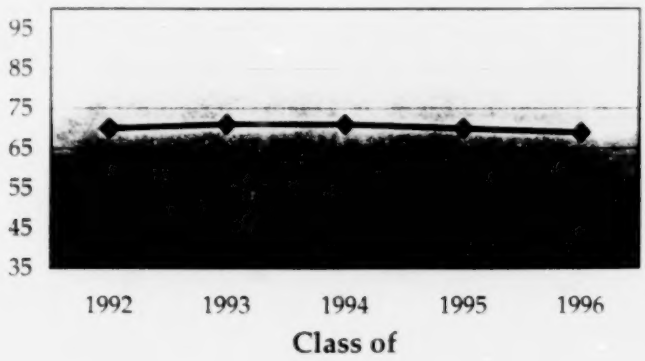
Four-Year Completion Rates, Classes of 1989-1999



Source: Division of Assessment and Accountability, The Class of 1999 Four-Year Longitudinal Report and 1998-1999 Event Dropout Rates

At what rate do NYC students complete high school by age 21?

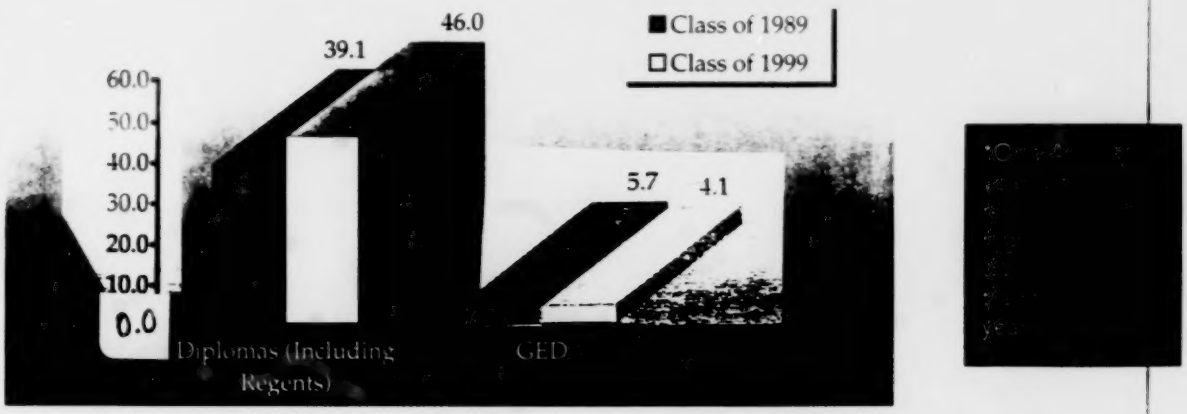
Seven-Year Completion Rates



Source: The Division of Assessment and Accountability, The Class of 1996 Final Longitudinal Report, A Three-Year Follow-Up Study, p. 12

What type of diploma do students earn after four years of high school?

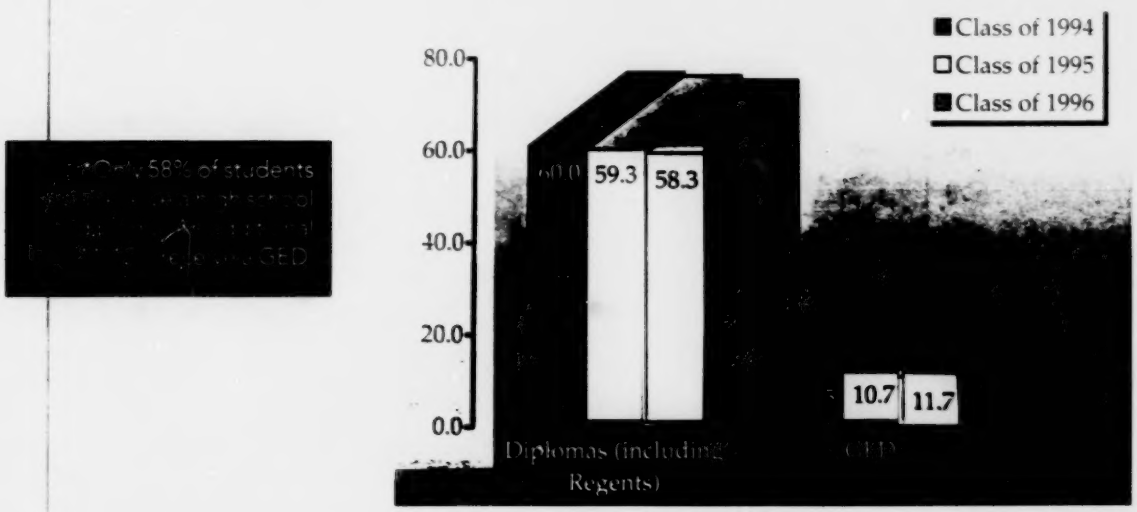
Four-Year School Completion Rates of the Classes of 1989 and 1999



Source: Calculated from figures on p. 8 of Division of Assessment and Accountability, The Class of 1999 Four-Year Longitudinal Report and 1998-1999 Event Dropout Rates

What type of diploma do students earn after seven years of high school?

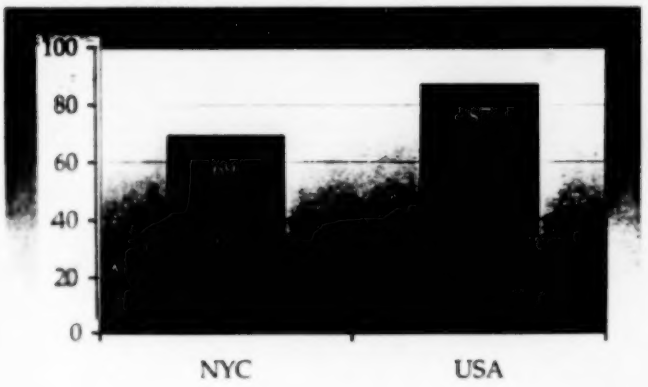
Seven-Year Completion Rates of the Classes of 1994, 1995 & 1996



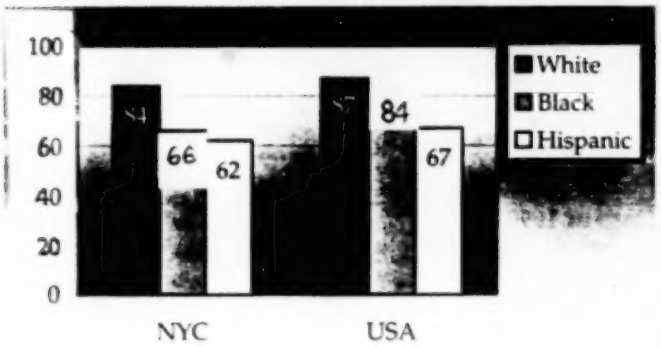
Source: Calculated from figure on p. 4 of The Division of Assessment and Accountability, The Class of 1996 Final Longitudinal Report, A Three-Year Follow-Up Study, & the 1995 version of the same

How does NYC's school completion rate compare with the U.S.?

Class of 1996 After 7 Years

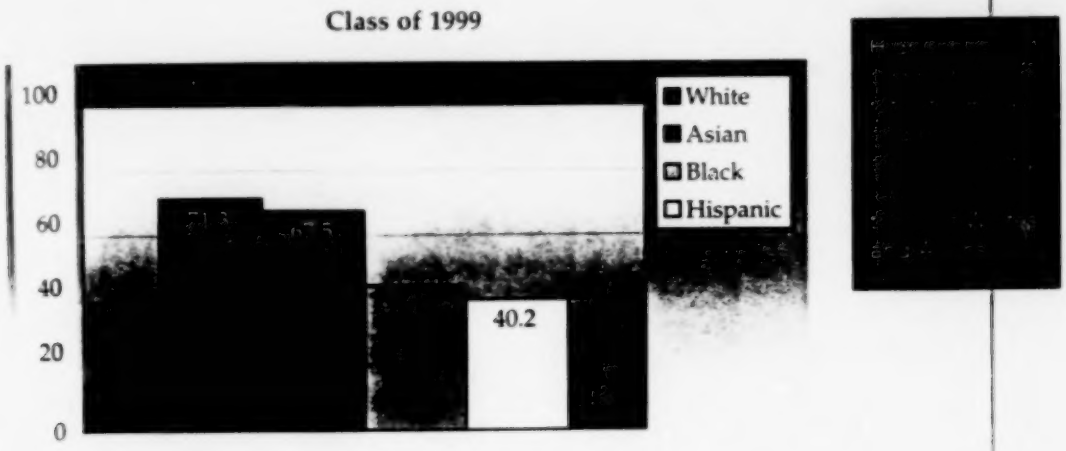


Completion Rates After 7 Years by Race (1996)



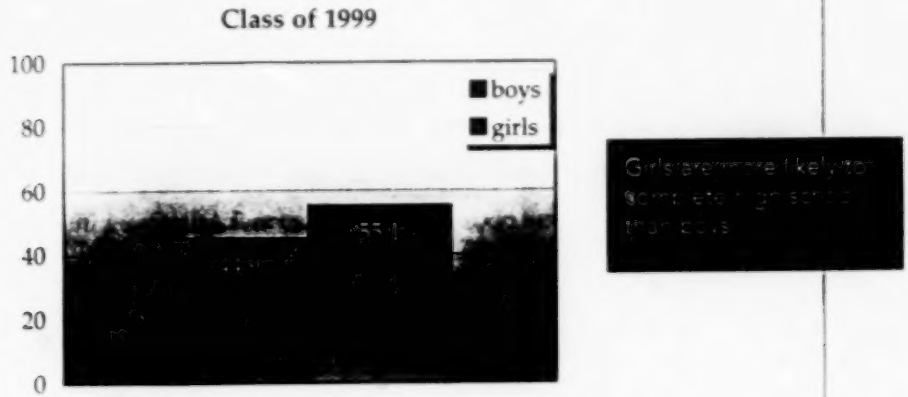
Source: NYC Annual Reports and Department of Commerce, Educational Attainment in the United States, 1998

Do completion rates in NYC vary by racial/ethnic groups?



Source: Division of Assessment and Accountability, The Class of 1999 Four-Year Longitudinal Report and 1998-1999 Event Dropout Rates

Do completion rates differ for boys and girls?



Source: Division of Assessment and Accountability, The Class of 1999 Four-Year Longitudinal Report and 1998-1999 Event Dropout Rates

What are the SAT achievement levels of NYC high school graduates?

Average SAT Scores of High School Seniors, NYC vs. Rest of the State and U.S.A., 1996-1999

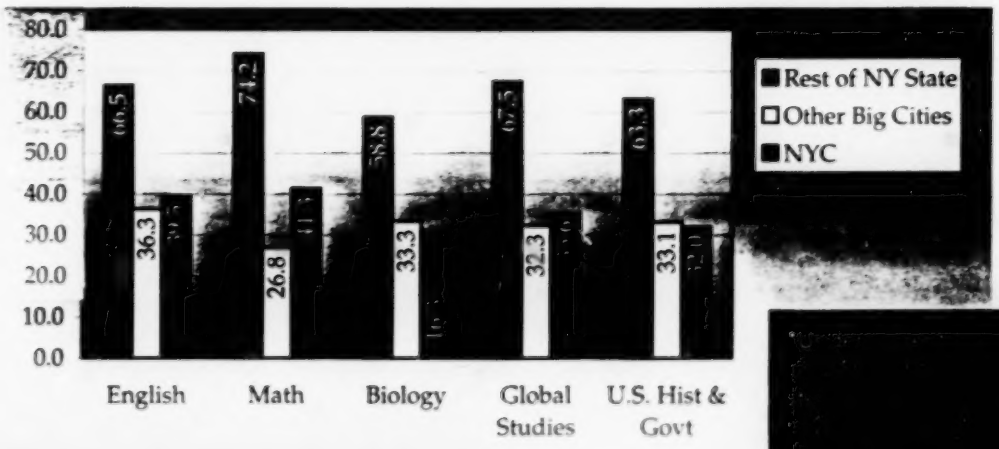
	NYC	NY State	U.S.
Verbal 96	448	497	505
Verbal 97	448	495	505
Verbal 98	na	495	505
Verbal 99	441	495	505
Math 96	465	499	508
Math 97	462	502	511
Math 98	na	503	512

Source: NYC Annual Schools Reports and State Education Department, A Report to the Governor and the Legislature on the Educational Status of the State's Schools, April 1999, p. 52

How will city students fare under the state's new graduation requirements?

Students who entered ninth grade in 1996, and all subsequent classes, will have to pass a set of Regents exams in order to earn a high school degree. To receive a Regents diploma, students must score above 65 on all five examinations. Presently, the State allows those taking the exams who score between 55 and 64 to receive a local diploma. This practice will end with the incoming class of 2004.

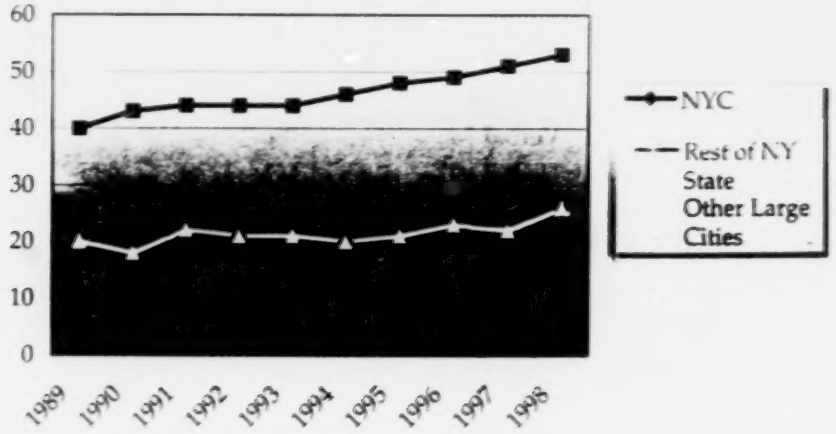
1998 Percentage of Average Enrollment Passing Regents Exams Required for Graduation



Source: State Education Department, A Report to the Governor and the Legislature on the Educational Status of the State's Schools, April 1999, p. 89, 178

How well has the city responded to the state's challenge in the past?

Percent of Graduates Earning Regents Diplomas 1989-1998



Source: State Education Department, A Report to the Governor and the Legislature on the Educational Status of the State's Schools, April 1999, p. 51

How many city graduates need remedial work in college?

Source: CUNY Student Data Book, 1998

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How well are students reading in elementary and middle school?

Citywide Reading Test Scores, 1994-2000

Year	% at an acceptable level	Test
2000	40.8	
1999	35.7	New CTB-R Test: Adjusted for rescaling to proficiency levels
1998	43.6	Equated for change from 1991 to 1996 norms
1997	47.3	
1996	43.7	Adjusted for change in ELL exemption
1995	42.1	Adjusted for change to CTB-R
1994	47.5	

The city instituted the CTB-R and CTB-M exams in 1998. In 1999 they raised the norms for what constituted acceptable performance on the test. This "rescaling" caused a drop in the percentage of students who were deemed to have performed at an acceptable level in 1999.

Sources: State of City Schools '98 and BOE, A Report on the Results of the CTB-Reading Test (CTB-R) Administration in New York City, Including the Results of the State Grade Four English Language (ELA) Test, Chancellor's 60-Day Report, A Report on the CTB-Mathematics Test (CTB-M) Administration in New York City, June 2000

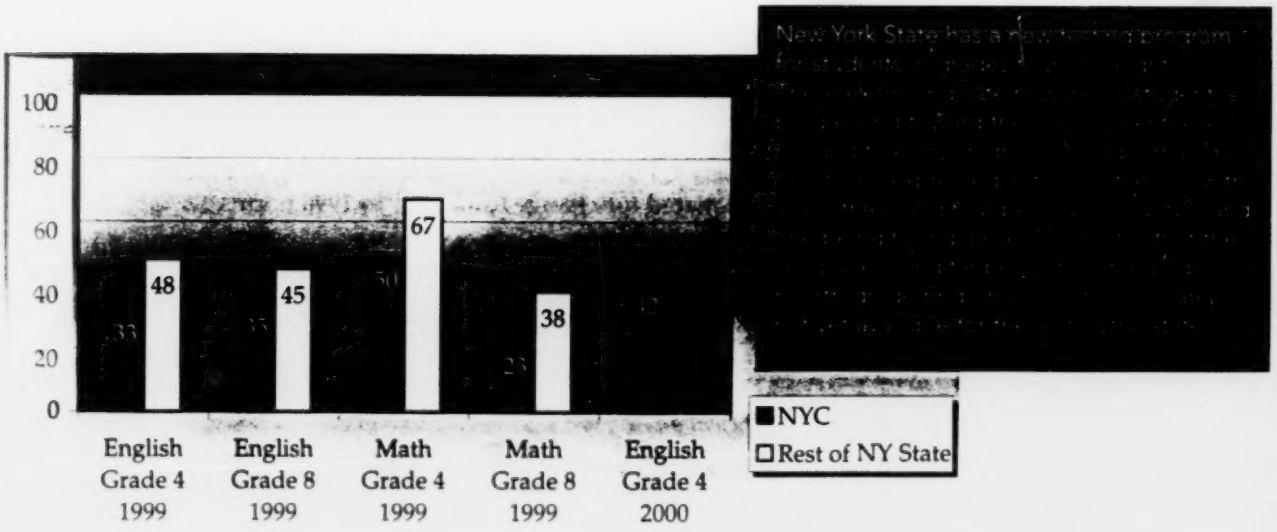
How well are students doing in mathematics in elementary and middle school?

Citywide Mathematics Scores 1994-2000

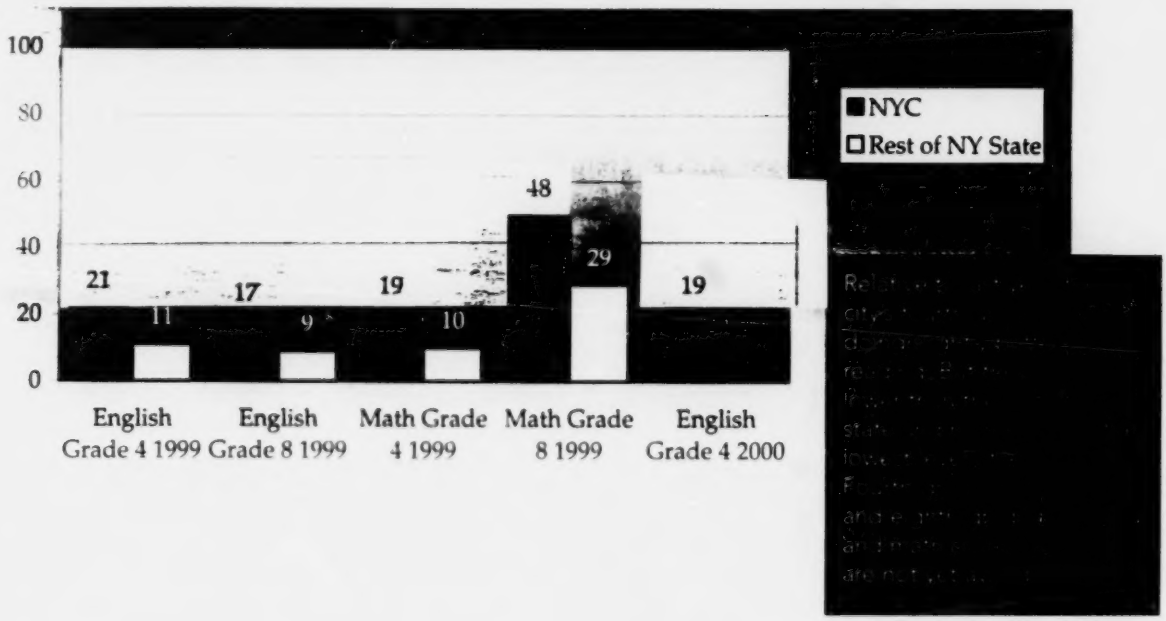
Year	% at an acceptable level	Test
2000	32.9	CTB-M
1999	31.9	New CTB-M Test (Rescaled Score)
1998	63.1	CAT-5
1997	60.4	CAT-5
1996	59.7	CAT-5
1995	53.3	CAT-5
1994	49.9	CAT-5

How Do NYC's Test Scores Compare with the Rest of New York State?

State Test Scores, the Percentage of Students Scoring at Passing Levels, NYC vs. Rest of NY State in 1999 & 2000



Students Scoring at Level 1, the Lowest Level, NYC vs. Rest of NY State in 1999 & 2000



Source: 1999 NYC School Report Cards and State Education Department, A Report to the Governor and the Legislature on the Educational Status of the State's Schools, August 2000

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NYC School Reading Scores, Grades 3, 5, 6 & 7, 2000

District	Percentage Scoring at an acceptable level
1	39
2	68
3	47
4	33
5	23
6	36
7	29
8	33
9	24
10	31
11	41
12	26
13	37
14	40
15	46
16	43
17	36
18	51
19	29
20	55
21	53
22	53
23	29
24	50
25	59
26	79
27	39
28	51
29	48
30	49
31	56
32	31
33	24
75	4.8
85	21.5
NYC Total:	**42**

Source: NYC Annual Reading Reports

How are NYC Elementary Schools Doing Generally?

The Five Best & Worst Elementary Schools in NYC as Measured by the Percentage of Students Scoring at an Acceptable Level

Rank	District	School	% of students scoring at/above acceptable level	Racial/Ethnic Composition			
				Black	Hispanic	White	Other
1	2	234	94.9	9.2	6.5	73.0	11.3
2	2	6	92.9	8.1	6.3	76.6	9.0
3	26	98	92.1	21.7	5.6	51.4	21.3
3	26	188	92.1	7.0	6.8	58.0	28.2
5	2	871	92.0	13.3	14.4	60.5	11.9
673	12	195	16.4	23.0	72.1	0.8	4.2
674	9	90	15.9	35.5	62.4	0.3	1.8
675	3	207	15.1	68.9	27.7	0.7	2.7
676	27	105	12.6	83.2	13.3	1.3	2.2
677	3	180	12.5	85.8	13.0	0.9	0.3

Source: NYC Annual School Reading Reports

The Distribution of Schools by Percentage of Students Reading at Acceptable Levels

% of Students scoring at/above acceptable level	Percentage of schools at these levels
0-10	0
11-20	7.5
21-30	21.3
31-40	21.0
41-50	17.0
51-60	12.8
61-70	10.0
71-80	7.3
81-90	2.5
91-100	0.0

[redacted]

Source: NYC Annual Reading Reports

How many students are in Schools Under Registration Review (SURR) schools?

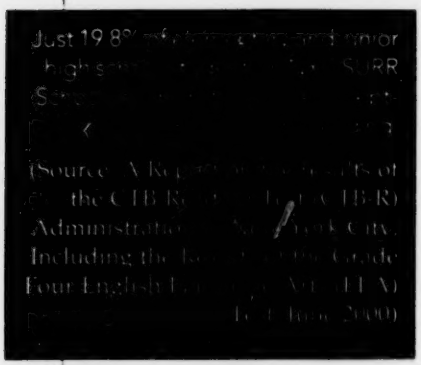
	NYC Schools	# of Students	Rest of NYS	# of Students
1989-90	40	45,418	4	1,903
1990-91	40	45,418	8	7,245
1991-92	na	na	na	na
1992-93	56	62,353	6	6,038
1993-94	55	61,117	6	6,077
1994-95	72	75,066	7	8,092
1995-96	78	79,027	8	8,714
1996-97	92	88,762	7	9,218
1997-98	94	87,261	4	6,304
1998-99	97	na	8	na

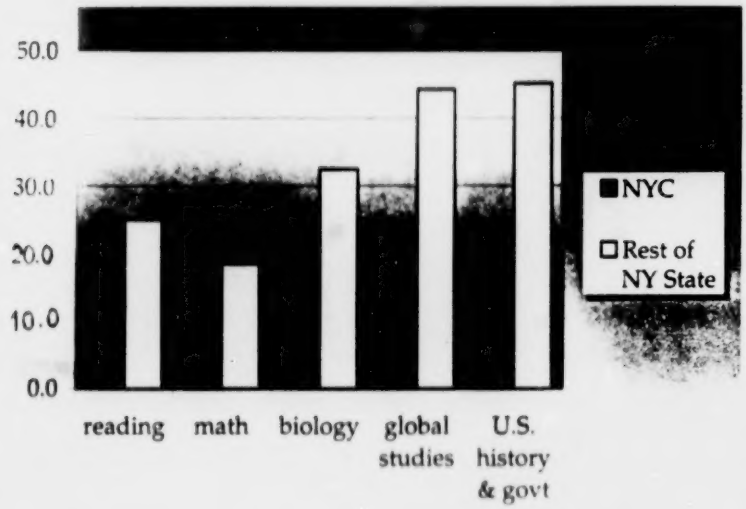
Source: State of City Schools, '98, & State Education Department, A Report to the Governor and the Legislature on the Educational Status of the State's Schools, April 1999, p. 20, 177

What is the racial/ethnic composition of SURR schools? (1998)

	NYC	NYS
Black	41.2	34.5
Hispanic	54.5	20.4
White	1	41.2
Other	3.3	3.8

What percentage of SURR school students pass their Regents exams?





Source: State Education Department, A Report to the Governor and the State Legislature on the Educational Status of the State's Schools, April 1999, p. 178

How are Limited English Proficient (LEP) students doing?

The Percentage of Students in LEP

	1996	1997	1998	1999
Elementary:	20.0	18.3	17.6	16.5
Middle School:	16.2	14.7	15.3	14.6

Percentage of LEP Students Attaining English Proficiency

	1996	1997	1998	1999
Elementary:	23.1	24.1	24.7	25.5
Middle School:	10.7	14.1	12.6	14.3

Percentage of LEP Students Scoring at an Acceptable Level

	1996	1997	1998	1999
Elementary:				
Reading	9.3	12.6	9.8	10.3
Math	23.6	23.6	23.8	12.8
Middle School:				
Reading	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	6.9
Math	19.1	22.5	21.6	14.9

Source: NYC Annual School Reports

How are special education students doing?

Percentage of Elementary School Students in:

	1997	1998	1999
Resource Room:	5.9	5.4	6.0
Self-Contained Classes:	5.8	5.5	5.4

Percentage of Middle School Students in:

	1997	1998	1999
Resource Room:	6.8	6.8	7.0
Self-Contained Classes:	7.5	7.4	7.4

Percentage of Special Education Students at an acceptable level

	1998	1999
Elementary:		
Reading	2.6	3.4
Math	4.0	3.7
Middle School:		
Reading	2.3	3.0
Math	3.0	3.1

Percentage of the Class of 1999 Special Education Students Who Graduated

District 75:	1.3
Self-Contained:	8.2

Percentage of the Class of 1996 Special Education Students Who Graduated After 7 Years

District 75:	12.6
Self-Contained:	35.9

Source: Division of Assessment and Accountability, The Class of 1999 Four-Year Longitudinal Report and 1998-1999 Event Dropout Rates, & The Division of Assessment and Accountability, The Class of 1996 Final Longitudinal Report, A Three-Year Follow-Up Study

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